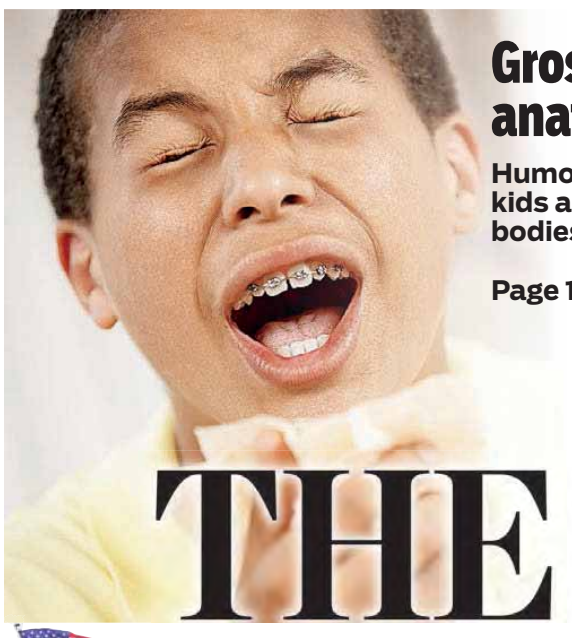


Gross anatomy

Humor can teach kids about their bodies.

Page 1D



One more time

It's looking more and more like OU will face a team in the Big 12 title game that they have already beaten.

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THE OKLAHOMAN

Tuesday, November 14, 2017
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Four dozen agencies targeted for cuts

BY DALE DENWALT
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Oklahoma lawmakers in two key budget committees will decide Tuesday whether to recommend cutting 49 agency budgets to make up for lost revenue from an unconstitutional cigarette fee they passed in May.

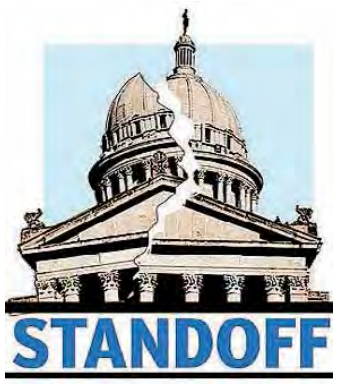
Over the past seven weeks of the special session, lawmakers have struggled to reach any kind of agreement that would raise new money to plug the $215 million hole. The revised budget pulls a combined $60.3 million from agency spending plans; the cuts average 2.5 percent.

If the revised budget passes the Legislature and is signed by the governor, agencies will have to force the spending cuts into just the final eight months remaining of fiscal year 2018, which ends in June.

Legislative leaders also will seek to use more than $60 million from agency revolving funds, which are like savings accounts, to make up for the $215 million that was lost when the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled the cigarette fee unconstitutional. Just three agencies, each with a critical health care mission, were set to receive the cigarette fee revenue: the Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Health Care Authority and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Under the new proposed budget, each of those agencies would still receive less

SEE CUTS, 2A





OF MICE AND MEN

Researchers use germ-free mice to study human gut bacteria

BY MEG WINGERTER
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Mice have a reputation as filthy disease carriers, but the little red-eyed residents of the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation's new lab are cleaner than any human could hope to be.

The rodents were bred to be germ-free so researchers could use them to study how certain types of bacteria affect their risk of disease. And while treatments that work in mice don't always translate well to humans, studying them is a first step toward learning how bacteria shape our health.

The average person carries trillions of bacteria, and research on humans has found links between carrying certain mixes of bacteria and diseases such as diabetes, depression, obesity and malnutrition, said Sai Tummala, executive vice president of comparative medicine at OMRF.

The issue doesn't seem to be that one type of bacteria in your colon makes you sick in the way that infection with the germ that causes cholera, for example, will send you straight to a hospital.

SEE MICE, 3A



Upper left: Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation's new sterile environment research lab contains mice bred to not carry any bacteria, so researchers can test the effects of specific bacteria in a totally sterile environment. Above: Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation veterinary training coordinator Heather Splawn handles materials in a sterile mouse habitat in the new totally sterile environment research lab is seen on Friday in Oklahoma City. [PHOTOS BY STEVE SISNEY, THE OKLAHOMAN]



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation veterinary training coordinator Heather Splawn handles materials in a sterile mouse habitat.

ONLINE

To watch a video about the sterile lab mice at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, go to Oklahoman.com.

Settlement could net millions for districts

BY TIM WILLERT
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School districts across Oklahoma, including Oklahoma City Public Schools, could recoup as much as $100 million or more in state aid payments miscalculated for 22 years if a lawsuit is settled, *The Oklahoman* has learned.

School boards in Oklahoma City and Enid were scheduled to meet behind closed doors Monday night to consider settling a lawsuit filed against the state Education Department and others on behalf of four school districts in September 2016.

"The only thing I can tell you is we're discussing the case tonight," said Brandon Carey, general counsel for the Oklahoma City district.

After a more than four-hour public meeting Monday night, the Oklahoma City board adjourned without going into closed session.

Enid Public Schools, Midwest City-Del City, Oklahoma City Public Schools and Ponca City Public Schools are seeking to recover funds "found to have been unlawfully disbursed by the OSDE due to its failure to apply the statutory 11% limit on assessment of commercial and agricultural personal property in calculating State Aid," the lawsuit states. According to a report in the Enid News & Eagle, Enid Public Schools Superintendent Darrell Floyd attended a mediation hearing in Oklahoma City on Nov. 1 involving other school districts, the state Department of Education and solicitor general of Oklahoma.

"After an 11-hour meeting, an agreement was reached to settle the case," the newspaper reported.

"The terms of the agreement include EPS recouping 11 years of underpayments, between 2004 and 2014, over an 11-year repayment period, beginning in 2018, the newspaper reported.

SEE SETTLE, 2A

TODAY'S PRAYER
Loving God, we pray for all children that they may be guided by wise and loving role models. Amen.

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Comics	4E	Sports	1B
Deaths	6A	Stocks	5C

Weather, 6C
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